The Tragidie of Ferrex and Porrex,

set forth without addition or alteration but altogether as the same was shewed on stage before the Queenes Maiestie, about nine yeares past, *vz.* the xviij. day of Ianuarie. 1561. by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple.

Seen and allowed. &c.

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XUM

The argument of the Tragedie.

Gorboduc king of Brittaine, diuided his realme in his life time to his sonnes, Ferrex and Porrex. The sonnes fell to discention. The yonger killed the elder. The mother that more dearely loued the elder, for reuenge killed the yonger. The people moued with the crueltie of the fact, rose in rebellion and slew both father and mother. The nobilitie assembled and most terribly destroyed the rebels. And afterwardes for want of issue of the prince whereby the succession of the crowne became uncertaine, they fell to ciuill warre, in which both they and many of of their issues were slaine, and the land for a long time almost desolate and miserably wasted.

¶ The P. to the Reader.

WHere this Tragedie was for furniture of part of the grand Christmasse in the Inner Temple first written about nine yeares agoe by the right honourable Thomas now Lorde Buckherst, and by T. Norton, and after throwrd before her Maiestie, and neuer intended by the authors therof to be published: yet one W. G. getting a copie therof at some pongmans hand that lacked a litle money and much discretion, in the last great plage. an. 1565. about v. yeares past, while the said Lord was out of England, and T. Norton farre out of London, and neither of t'em both made yware, put it forth exceedingly corrupted: euen as if by meanes of a broker for hire, he should haue entised into his house a faire maide and done her villanie, and after all to descratched her face, torne her apparell, berayed and disfigured her, and then thrust her out of dores dishonested. In such plight after long wandring she came at length home to the sight of her frendes who scant knew her but by a few tokens and markes remayning. They, the authors I meane, though they were very much displeased that she so ranne abroad without leaue, whereby she caught her shame, as many wantons do, yet seing the case as it is remediless, haue for common honestie and shamefastnesse new apparelled, trimmed, and attired her in such forme as she was before. In which better forme since she hath come to me, I haue harbored her for her frendes sake and her owne, and I do not dout her parentes the authors will not now be discontent that she goe abroad among you good readers, so it be in honest companie. For she is by my encouragement and others somewhat lesse ashamed of the dishonestie done to her because it was by fraude and force. If she be welcome among you and gently enterteined, in fauor of the house from whense she is descended, and of her owne nature courteously disposed to offend no man, her frendes will thanke you for it. If not, but that she shall be still reproched with her former misshap, or quarelled at by enuious persons, she poore gentlewoma wil surely play Lucreces part, & of her self die for shame, and I shall wishe that she had taried still at home with me, where she was welcome: for she did neuer put me to more charge, but this one poore blacke gowne lined with white that I haue now geuen her to goe abroad among you withall.

¶ The names of the speakers.

Gorboduc, King of great Brittaine.
Videna, Queene and wife to king Gorboduc.
Ferrex, elder sonne to king Gorboduc.
Porrex, yonger sonne to king Gorboduc.
Cloyton, Duke of Cornewall.
Fergus, Duke of Albanye.
Mandud, Duke of Loegris.
Gwenard, Duke of Cumberland.
Eubulus, Secretarie to the king.
Arostus, a counsellor to the king.
Dordan, a counsellor assigned by the king to his eldest sonne Ferrex.
Philander, a counsellor assigned by the king to his yongest sonne Porrex.
{ Both being of the olde kinges counsell before.
Hermon, a parasite remaining with Ferrex.
Tyndar, a parasite remaining with Porrex,
Nuntius, a messenger of the elder brothers death.
Nuntius, a messenger of Duke Fergus rising in armes.
Marcella, a lady of the Queenes priuie chamber.
Chorus, foure auncient and sage men of Brittaine.

¶ The

¶ The order of the domme shew before the first act, and the signification therof.

¶ First the Musicke of Violenze began to play, during which came in vpon the stage sixe wilde men clothed in leaues. Of whom the first bare in his necke a fagot of small stickes, which they all both seuerally and together assayed with all their strengthes to breake, but it could not be broken by them. At the length one of them plucked out one of the stickes and brake it: And the rest plucking out all the other stickes one after an other did easely breake them, the same being seuered: which being conioyned they had before attempted in vaine. After they had this done, they departed the stage, and the Musicke ceased. Hereby was signified, that a state knit in vnitie doth continue strong against all force. But being diuided, is easily destroyed. As befell vpon Duke Gorboduc diuiding his land to his two sonnes which he before held in Monarchie. And vpon the dissention of the brethren to whom it was diuided.

Viden. Ferrex.

Viden. The silent night, that bringes the quiet pawse,
From painefull tranailes of the wearic day,
Prolonges my carefull thoughtes, and makes me blame
The slowe Aurore, that so for loue or shame
Doth long delay to shewe her blushing face,
And now the day renewes my griefull plaint.

Ferrex. My gracious lady and my mother deare,
Pardon my griefe for your so grieued minde,
To aske what cause tormenteth so your hart.

Viden. So great a wrong, and so vniust despite,
Without all cause, against all course of kinde!

Ferrex. Such causeleſſe wrong and so vniust despite,
May haue redresse, or at the least, reuenge.

Viden. Neither, my sonne: such is the froward will,
The person such, such my misshappe and thine.

Ferrex. Mine know I none, but grief for your distresse.

Viden. Yes: mine for thine my sonne: A father? no:
In kinde a father, not in kindlinesse.

Ferrex. My father? why? I know nothing at all,
wherein I haue misdone vnto his grace.

Viden. Therefore, the more vnkinde to thee and mee.
For, knowing well (my sonne) the tender loue

That

That I haue euer borne and beare to thee,
Be greued thereat, is not content alone,
To spoile thee of my sight my chiefest ioye,
But thee, of thy birthright and heritage
Causeleſſe, vnkindly, and in wrongfull wise,
Against all lawe and right, he will bereaue:
Halfe of his kingdome he will geue away.

Ferrex. To whom?

Viden. Euen to Porrex his yonger sonne,
whose growing pride I do so sore suspect,
That being raised to equall rule with thee,
Me thinkes I see his enuious hart to swell,
Filled with disdaine and with ambicious hope,
The end the Goddes do know, whose altars I
Full oft haue made in vaine, of cattell slaine
To send the sacred smoke to heauens throne,
For thee my sonne, if thinges do so succede,
As now my ielous minde misdemeth sore.

Ferrex. Madame, leaue care & carefull plaint for me,
Iust hath my father bene to euery wight:
His first vniustice he will not extend
To me I trust, that geue no cause therof:
My brothers pride shall hurt him selfe, not me.

Viden. So graunt the Goddes: But yet thy father so
Hath firmely fixed his vnmoued minde,
That plaintes and prayers can no whit anaile,
For those haue I assayed, but euen this day,
He will endeuour to procure assent
Of all his counsell to his fonde deuise.

Ferrex. Their ancestors from race to race haue borne
True fayth to my forefathers and their seede:
I trust they eke will beare the like to me.

A.iij. Viden.

Viden. There resteth all. But if they faile therein,
And if the end bring forth an ill successe:
On them and theirs the mischiefe shall befall,
And so I pray the Goddes requite it them,
And so they will, for so is wont to be.
When lordes, and trusted rulers vnder kinges,
To please the present fancie of the prince,
With wrong transpose the course of gouernance,
Murders, mischiefe, or ciuill sword at length,
Or mutuall treason, or a iust reuenge,
When right succeding line returnes againe,
By Ioues iust iudgement and deserued wrath,
Brings them to cruell and reprochfull death,
And rootes their names and kindredes from the earth.

Ferrex. Mother, content you, you shall see the end.

Viden. The end? thy end I feare, Ioue end me first.

Actus primus. Scena secunda.

Gorboduc. Arostus. Philander. Eubulus.

GOrb. My lords, whose graue aduise & faithful aide,
Haue long vpheld my honour and my realme,
And brought me to this age from tender yeres,
Guidyng so great estate with great renowme:
Nowe more importeth mee, than erst, to vse
Your fayth and wisedome, whereby yet I reigne:
That when by death my life and rule shall cease,
The kingdome yet may with vnbroken course,
Haue certayne prince, by whose vndoubted right,
Your wealth and peace may stand in quiet stay,
And eke that they whome nature hath prepardo,
In time to take my place in princely seate,

while

while in their fathers tyme their pliant youth
yeldes to the frame of skilfull gouernance,
Maye so be taught and trayned in noble actes,
As what their fathers which haue reigned before
Haue with great fame deriued downe to them,
with honour they may leaue vnto their seede:
And not be thought for their vnworthy life,
And for their lawlesse swaruynge out of kinde,
worthy to lose what lawe and kind them gaue:
But that they may preserue the common peace,
The cause that firste began and still maintaines
The lyneall course of kinges inheritance.
For me, for myne, for you, and for the state,
whereof both I and you haue charge and care,
Thus do I meane to vse your wonted fayth
To me and myne, and to your native lande.
My lordes be playne without all wyle respect
Or poysonous craft to speake in pleasyng wise,
Lest as the blame of yll succedyng thinges
Shall light on you, so light the harmes also.

Arostus. Your good acceptance so (most noble king)
Of suche our faithfulnesse as heretofore
We haue employed in duties to your grace,
And to this realme whose worthy head you are,
well proues that neyther you mistrust at all,
Nor we shall neede in boasting wise to shewe,
Our trueth to you, nor yet our wakefull care
For you, for yours, and for our native lande.
wherefore (O kyng) I speake as one for all,
Sithe all as one do beare you egall faith:
Doubt not to vse our counsells and our aides,
whose honours, goods and lyues are whole auowed
To serue, to ayde, and to defende your grace.

Gorb. My lordes, I thanke you all. Thus is the case.

Ye know, the Gods, who haue the soueraigne care
For kings, for kingdomes, and for common weales,
Haue me two sonnes in my more lusty age.
Who nowe in my decayeng yeres are growen
Well towardes ryper state of minde and strength,
To take in hande some greater princely charge.
As yet they lyue and spende hopefull daies,
With me and with their mother here in courte.
Their age nowe asketh other place and trade,
And myne also doth aske an other chaunge:
Theirs to more trauaile, myne to greater ease.
Whan fatall death shall ende my mortall life,
My purpose is to leaue vnto them twaine
The realme diuided into two sondry partes:
The one Ferrex myne elder sonne shall haue,
The other shall the yonger Porrex rule.
That both my purpose may more firmely stande,
And eke that they may better rule their charge,
I meane forthwith to place them in the same:
That in my life they may both learne to rule,
And I may ioy to see their ruling well.
This is in summe, what I wolde haue ye wey:
First whether ye allowe my whole deuise,
And thynke it good for me, for them, for you,
And for our countrey, mother of vs all:
And if ye lyke it, and allowe it well,
Then for their guydinge and their gouernaunce,
Shew forth such meanes of circumstance,
As ye thinke meete to be both knowne and kept.
Loe, this is all, now tell me your aduise.

Aros: And this is much, and asketh great aduise,
But for my part, my soueraigne lord and kyng,
This do I thinke. Your maiestie doth know,
How vnder you in iustice and in peace,
Great wealth and honour, long we haue enioyed.

So

So as we can not seeme with gredie myndes
To willbe for change of prince or gouernaunce:
But if we lyke your purpose and deuise,
Our lyking must be deemed to proceede
Of rightfull reason, and of heedefull care,
Not for our selues, but for the common state,
Sithe our owne state doth neede no better change:
I thinke in all as erst your Grace hath saide.
Firste when you shall vnlode your aged mynde
Of heuye care and troubles manifolde,
And laye the same vpon my Lordes your sonnes,
whose growing yeres may beare the burden long,
And long I may the Goddes to graunt it so,
And in your life while you shall so beholde
Their rule, their vertues, and their noble deedes,
Suche as their kinde behighteth to vs all,
Great be the profites that shall growe therof,
Your age in quiet shall the longer last.
Your lasting age shalbe their longer stay,
For cares of kynges, that rule as you haue ruled,
For publique wealth and not for priuate ioye,
Do waste mannes lyfe, and hasten crooked age,
with furrowed face and with enfeebled lymmes,
To draw on creepyng death a swifter pace.
They two yet yong shall beare the parted reigne
with greater ease, than one, nowe olde, alone,
Can welde the whole, for whom muche harder is
with lessened strength the double weight to beare.
Your eye, your counsell, and the graue regarde
Of Father, yea of such a fathers name,
Nowe at beginning of their sonded reigne,
when is the hazarde of their whole successe,
Shall bridle so their force of youthfull heartes,
And so restreine the rage of insolence,
whiche most assailes the yonge and noble minds,

And so shall guide and traine in tempred stay
Their yet greene bending wittes with reuerent awe,
As now inured with vertues at the first,
Custome (O king) shall bring delightfulnesse.
By vse of vertue, vice shall growe in hate,
But if you so dispose it, that the daye,
which endes your life, shall first begin their reigne,
Great is the perill what will be the ende,
when such beginning of such liberties
Voide of suche stayes as in your life do lye,
Shall leaue them free to traiterous flatterie,
The greatest pestilence of noble youthe,
whiche perill shalbe past, if in your life,
Their tempred youthe with aged fathers awe,
Be brought in vse of skilfull stayednesse.
And in your life their liues disposed so,
Shall length your noble life in ioyfulnesse.
Thus thinke I that your grace hath wisely thought,
And that your tender care of common weale,
Hath bred this thought, so to diuide your lande,
And plant your sonnes to beare the present rule,
while you yet liue to see their rulinge well,
That you may longer lyue by ioye therein.
what further meanes behouefull are and meete
At greater leisure may your grace deuise,
when all haue said, and when we be agreed
If this be best to part the realme in twaine,
And place your sonnes in present gouernement,
whereof as I haue plainely said my mynde,
So would I here the rest of all my Lordes.

Philand. In part I thinke as hath bene said before,
In parte agayne my minde is otherwise.
As for dinding of this realme in twaine,
And lotting out the same in egall partes,

To either of my lordes your graces sonnes,
That thinke I best for this your realmes behoue,
For profite and aduauncement of your sonnes,
And for your comforte and your honour eke.
But so to place them, while your life do last,
To yelde to them your royall gouernaunce,
To be aboue them onely in the name
Of father, not in kingly state also,
I thinke not good for you, for them, nor vs.
This kingdome since the bloudie ciuill fielde
where Morgan slaine did yeld his conquered parte
Vnto his cosins sworde in Camberland,
Contenueth all that whilome did suffice
Three noble sonnes of your forefather Brute.
So your two sonnes, it maye suffice also.
The more, the stronger, if they gree in one.
The smaller compasse that the realme doth holde,
The easier is the swey thereof to welde,
The nearer Justice to the wronged poore,
The smaller charge, and yet ynoughe for one.
And whan the region is diuided so,
That brethren be the lordes of either parte,
Such strength doth nature knit betwene them both,
In sondrie bodies by conioyned loue,
That not as two, but one of doubled force,
Eche is to other as a sure defence.
The noblenesse and glory of the one
Doth sharpe the courage of the others mynde,
with vertuous enuie to contende for praise.
And suche an egalnesse hath nature made,
Betwene the brethren of one fathers seede,
As an vnkindly wrong it seemes to bee,
To throwe the brother subiect vnder feete
Of him, whose peere he is by course of kinde,
And nature that did make this egalnesse,

Ofte lo repineth at lo great a wrong,
That ofte she rayleth vp a grudginge griefe,
In yonger brethren at the elders state:
wherby both townes and kingdomes haue ben raled,
And famous stockes of royall blond destroied:
The brother, that shoulde be the brothers aide,
And haue a wakefull care for his defence,
Gapes for his death, and blames the lyngering yeres
That draw not forth his ende with faster course:
And oft impacient of lo longe delayes,
with hatefull slaughter he preuentes the fates,
And heapes a iuft reward for brothers bloode,
With endleffe vengeaunce on his ftocke for aye.
Suche mifchiefes here are wifely mette withall,
If egall ftate maye nourifhe egall lour,
where none hath cauſe to grudge at others good.
But nowe the head to ftoupe beneth them bothe,
Ne kinde, ne reaſon, ne good ordre beares.
And oft it hath ben ſeene, where natures courſe
Hath ben peruerted in diſordered wiſe,
when fathers ceaſe to know that they ſhould rule,
The children ceaſe to know they ſhould obey.
And often ouerkindly tenderneſſe
Is mother of vnkindly ſtubbornenefſe.
I ſpeake not this in enuie or reproche,
As if I grudged the glorie of your ſonnes,
whoſe honour I beſech the Goddes encreaſe:
Nor yet as if I thought there did remaine,
So filthie cankers in their noble breſtes,
whom I eſteeme (which is their greateſt praiſe)
Vndoubted children of ſo good a kyng.
Onelie I meane to ſhewe by certeine rules,
Whiche kinde hath graft within the mind of man,
That nature hath her ordre and her courſe,
Which (being broken) doth corrupt the ſtate

Of myndes and thinges, euen in the best of all.
My lordes your sonnes may learne to rule of you,
your owne example in your noble courte
Is fittest gyder of their youthfull yeares.
If you desire to see some present ioye
By sight of their well rulynge in your lyfe,
See them obey, so shall you see them rule,
who so obeyeth not with humblenesse
will rule with outrage and with violence.
Longe maye they rule I do beseche the Goddes,
But longe may they learne, ere they begyn to rule.
If kinde and fates wouldst suffre, I would wisshe
Them aged princes, and immortall kinges.
wherfore most noble kynge I well assent,
Betwene your sonnes that you diuide your realme,
And as in kinde, so match them in degree.
But while the Goddes prolong your royall life,
prolong your reigne: for therto lyue you here,
And therfore haue the Goddes so long forborne
To ioyne you to them selues, that still you might
Be prince and father of our common weale.
They when they see your children ripe to rule,
will make them roume, and will remoue you hence,
That yours in right enlaynge of your life
Maye rightly honour your immortall name.

Eub. Your wonted true regarde of faithfull hartes,
Makes me (O kinge) the bolder to presume,
To speake what I conceiue within my brest,
Although the same do not agree at all
with that which other here my lordes haue said.
Nor which your selfe haue seemed best to lyke.
pardon I crane, and that my wordes be deemed
To flowe from hartie zeale vnto your grace,
And to the safetie of your common weale.
To parte your realme vnto my lordes your sonnes,

I thinke not good for you,ne yet for them,
But worste of all for this our native lande,
within one land,one single rule is best:
Diuided reignes do make diuided harres.
But peace preserues the countrey and the prince,
Suche is in man the gredy minde to reigne,
So great is his desire to climbe aloste,
In worldly stage the stateliest partes to beare,
That faith and iustice and all kindly loue,
Do yelde vnto desire of soueraignitie,
where egall state doth raise an egall hope
To winne the thing that either wold attaine.
Your grace remembreth how in passed yeres
The mightie Brute,first prince of all this lande,
Possessed the same and ruled it well in one,
He thinking that the compasse did suffice,
For his three sonnes three kingdoms eke to make,
Cut it in three,as you would now in twaine.
But how much Brittish bloud hath since bene spilt,
To ioyne againe the sondred vnitie:
what princes slaine before their timely houre?
what wast of townes and people in the lande:
what treasons heaped on murders and on spoiles:
whose iust reuenge euen yet is scarcely ceased,
Ruthefull remembraunce is yet rawe in minde.
The Gods forbyd the like to chaunce againe:
And you(O king) geue not the cause therof.
My Lord Ferrex your elder sonne,perhappes
whome kinde and custome geues a rightfull hope
To be your heire and to succede your reigne,
Shall thinke that he doth suffre greater wrong
Than he perchaunce will beare,if power serue.
Porrex the younger so vpraised in state,
Perhappes in courage will be raysed also.
If flatterie then, which fayles not to assaile

The tendre mindes of yet vnkunning youth,
In one shall kindle and encrease disdaine,
And envie in the others hatte enflame,
This fire shall waste their lone, their lines, their land,
And ruthefull ruine shall destroy them both.
I wishe not this (O kyng) so to befall,
But feare the thing, that I do most abhorre.
Geue no beginning to so dreadfull ende.
Kepe them in order and obedience:
And let them both by now obeying you,
Learne such behauiour as beseemes their state,
The elder, mylde nesse in his gouernaunce,
The yonger, a yelding contentednesse.
And kepe them neare vnto your presence still,
That they restreyned by the awe of you,
May line in compasse of well trimmed staye,
And passe the perilles of their youthfull yeares.
Your aged life mawes on to febler tyme,
wherin you shall lesse able be to beare
The trauailes that in youth you haue susteyned,
Both in your persones and your realmes defence.
If planting now your soutes in further partes,
You sende them further from your present reach,
Lesse shall you know how they them selues demeane:
Traiterous corrupters of their pryuate youth,
Shall haue vnspied a muche more free accesse,
And if ambition and inflamed disdaine
Shall arme the one, the other, or them both,
To ciuill warre, or to vsurping pride,
Late shall you rue, that you ne reeked before.
Good is I graunt of all to hope the best,
But not to line still dreadlesse of the worst.
So truste the one, that the other be forsene.
Arme not vnkindnesse with princely power.
But you that long haue wisely ruled the reignes

Of royaltie within your noble realme,
So holde them, while the Gods for our anayles
Shall stretch the thred of your prolonged daies.
To soone he clambe into the flaming carre,
whose want of skill did set the earth on fire.
Time and example of your noble grace,
Shall teach your sonnes both to obey and rule,
when time hath taught them, time shal make the plat,
The place that now is fulle and so I pray
Long it remaine, to comforte of vs all.

Gorboduc. I take your faithful harts in thankful part.
But sithe I see no cause to draw my minde,
To feare the nature of my loving sonnes,
Or to misdeme that envie or disdaine,
Can there worke hate, where nature planteth loue:
In one selfe purpose do I still abide,
My loue extendeth egally to both,
My lande sufficeth for them both also.
Humber shall parte the marches of their realmes:
The Southerne part the elder shall possesse:
The Northerne shall Porrex the yonger rule:
In quiet I will passe mine aged dayes,
Free from the trauaile and the painefull cares,
That hasten age vpon the worthiest kinges.
But lest the fraude, that ye do seeme to feare,
Of flattering tongues, corrupt their tender youth,
And wrythe them to the wayes of youthfull lust,
To clunyng pride, or to renenging hate,
Or to neglecting of their carefull charge,
Lewdely to lyue in wanton recklessnesse,
Or to oppressing of the rightfull cause,
Or not to wreke the wronges done to the poore,
To treade downe truth, or fauour false deceite:
I meane to ioyne to eyther of my sonnes
Some one of those, whose long approued faith

And

And wisdome treed, may well assure my harte:
That inlying fraude shall finde no way to crepe
Into their tensed eares with graue aduise.
This is the ende, and so I pray you all
To beare my sonnes the loue and loyaltie
That I haue founde within your faithfull breastes.

Arostus. You, not your sonnes, our soueraign lord shal
Our faith and seruice while our liues do last. (want,

Chorus. When settled stay doth holde the royall throne
In stedfast place, by knowen and doubtles right,
And chiefely when discent on one alone
Makes single and vnparted reigne to light:
Eche chaunge of course vnioynts the whole estate,
And yeldes it thrall to ruyne by debate.
The strength that knit by faste accorde in one,
Against all forrein power of mightie foes,
Could of it selfe defende it selfe alone,
Dilioyned once, the former force doth lose.
The stickes, that sondred brake so soone in twaine,
In faggot bounde attempted were in vaine.
Oft tender mynde that leades the partiall eye
Of erring parentes in their childrens loue,
Destroyes the wrongly loued childe therby.
This doth the proude sonne of Apollo proue,
who rashely set in chariot of his sire,
Inflamed the parched earth with heauens fire.
And this great king, that doth deuide his land,
And chaunge the course of his discending crowne,
And yeldes the reigne into his childrens hande,
From blissfull state of ioye and great renowne,
A myrrour shall become to Princes all,
To learne to shunne the cause of suche a fall.

¶ The order and signification of the domme shew before the second acte.

¶ First the Musicke of Cornettes began to playe, during which came in vpon the stage a King accompanied with a nombre of his nobilitie and gentlemen. And after he had placed him self in a chaire of estate prepared for him: there came and kneled before him a graue and aged gentelman and offred vp a cuppe vnto him of wyne in a glasse, which the the King refused. After him commes a braue and lusty yong gentleman and presentes the King with a cup of golde filled with poyson, which the King accepted, and drinking the same, immediatly fell downe dead vpon the the stage, and so was carried thence away by his Lordes and gentelmen, and then the Musicke ceased. Hereby was signified, that as glasse by nature holdeth no poyson, but is clere and may easely be seen through, ne boweth by any arte: So a faythfull counsellour holdeth no treason, but is playne and open, ne yeldeth to any vndiscrete affection, but geueth holsome counsell, which the yll aduised Prince refuseth. The delightfull golde filled with poyson betokeneth flattery, which vnder faire seeming of pleasaunt wordes beareth deadly poyson, which destroyed the Prince that receyueth it. As befell in the two brethren Ferrex and Porrex, who refusing the holsome aduise of graue counsellours, credited these yong Paracites, and brought to their selues death and destruction therby.

Actus secundus. Scena prima.

Ferrex. Hermon. Dordan.

FErrex. I meruaile much what reason ledde the king
My Father, thus without all my desert,
To reue me halfe the kingdome, which by course

Of

Of law and nature ſhould remayne to me.

Hermon. If you with ſtubborne and vntamed pryde
Had ſtood againſt him in rebelling wiſe,
Or if with grudging minde you had enuied
So ſlow a fadyng of his aged yeres,
Or ſought before your time to haſte the courſe
Of fatall death vpon his royall head,
Or ſtained your ſtocke with murder of your kyn:
Some face of reaſon might perhaps haue ſeemed,
To yelde ſome likely cauſe to ſpoyle ye thus.

Ferrex. The wrekeful Gods powre on my curſed head
Eternall plagues and neuer dying woes,
The helliſh prince, adiudge my dampned ghoſt
To Tantales thirſte, or proude Ixions wheele,
Or cruell gripe to gnaw my growing harte,
To during tormentes and vnquenched flames,
If euer I conceyued ſo foule a thought,
To wiſſhe his ende of life, or yet of reigne.

Dordan. Ne yet your father (O moſt noble Prince)
Did euer thinke ſo fowle a thing of you.
For he, with more than fathers tendre loue,
while yet the fates do lende him life to rule,
(who long might lyue to ſee your ruling well)
To you my Lorde, and to his other ſonne:
Lo he reſignes his realme and royaltie:
which neuer would ſo wiſe a Prince haue done,
If he had once miſdemed that in your harte
There euer lodged ſo vnkinde a thought.
But tendre loue (my Lorde) and ſetled truſte
Of your good nature, and your noble minde,
Made him to place you thus in royall throne,
And now to gene you half his realme to guide,
Yea and that halfe which in abounding ſtore

Of things that serue to make a welthy realme,
In stately cities, and in frutefull soyle,
In temperate breathing of the milder heauen,
In thinges of nedefull vse, which frendly sea,
Transportes by traffike from the forreine partes,
In flowing wealth, in honour and in force,
Doth passe the double value of the parte,
That Porrex hath allotted to his reigne.
Such is your case, such is your fathers loue.

Ferrex. Ah loue, my frendes? loue wrongs not who he loues.

Dordan. Ne yet he wrongeth you, that geueth you
So large a reigne, ere that the course of time
Bring you to kingdome by discended right,
Which time perhaps might end your time before.

Ferrex. Is this no wrong, say you, to reaue from me
My native right of halfe so great a realme?
And thus to matche his yonger sonne with me
In egall power, and in as great degree?
Yea and what sonne? the sonne whose swelling pride
Woulde neuer yelde one poinct of reuerence,
Whan I the elder and apparaunt heire
Stoode in the likelihode to possesse the whole,
Yea and that sonne which from his childish age
Enuieth myne honour and doth hate my life.
What will he now do, when his pride, his rage,
The mindefull malice of his grudging harte,
Is armed with force, with wealth, and kingly state?

Hermon. Was this not wrong, yea yll aduised wrong,
To giue so mad a man so sharpe a sworde,
To so great perill of so great misshappe,
Wide open thus to set so large a waye?

Dordan. Alas my Lord, what griefull thing is this,

That

That of your brother you can thinke so ill?
I neuer saw him vtter likelie signe,
whereby a man might see or once mislleme
Such hate of you, ne such vnyelding pride.
Ill is their counsell, shamefull be their ende,
That raysing such mistrustfull feare in you,
Sowing the seede of such vnkindly hate,
Trauaile by treason to destroy you both.
wise is your brother, and of noble hope,
worthie to welde a large and mightie realme.
So much a stronger frende haue you therby,
whose strength is your strength, if you gree in one.

Hermon. If nature and the Goddes had pinched so
Their flowing bountie, and their noble giftes
Of princelie qualities, from you my Lorde,
And powrde them all at ones in wastfull wise
Upon your fathers yonger sonne alone:
perhappes there be that in your preiudice
would say that birth should yeld to worthinesse.
But sithe in eche good gift and princelie arte
Ye are his matche, and in the chiefe of all
In mildenesse and in sobre gouernaunce
Ye farre surmount: And sith there is in you
Sufficing skill and hopefull towardnesse
To weld the whole, and match your elders prayse:
I see no cause why ye should loose the halfe.
Nie would I willhe you yelde to such a losse:
Lest your milde sufferaunce of so great a wrongc,
Be deemed cowardisthe and simple dreade:
which shall geue courage to the fierie head
Of your yonge brother to inuade the whole.
while yet therfore stickes in the peoples minde
The lothed wrong of your disheritaunce,
And ere your brother haue by settled power,

By guile full clone of an allurying louve,
Got him some force and fauour in the realme,
And while the noble Queene your mother lyues,
To worke and practise all for your auaile,
Attempt redresse by armes, and wreake your self
Vpon his life, that gayneth by your losse,
Who nowe to shame of you, and griefe of vs,
In your owne kingdome triumphes ouer you.
Shew now your courage meete for kingly state,
That they which haue auowed to spend their goods,
Their landes, their liues and honours in your cause,
May be the bolder to maineyne your parte,
When they do see that cowarde feare in you,
Shall not betray ne faile their faithfull hartes.
If once the death of Porrex ende the strife,
And pay the price of his vsurped reigne,
Your mother shall perswade the angry kyng,
The Lords your frends eke shall appease his rage.
For they be wise, and well they can forsee,
That ere longe time your aged fathers death
Will bryng a time when you shall well requite
Their frendlie fauour, or their hatefull spite,
Yea, or their slackenesse to auaunce your cause,
„ Wise men do not so hang on passing state
„ Of present Princes, chiefely in their age,
„ But they will further cast their reaching eye,
„ To viewe and weye the times and reignes to come.
Ne is it likely, though the kyng be wrothe,
That he yet will, or that the realme will beare,
Extreme reuenge vpon his onely sonne.
Or if he woulde, what one is he that dare
Be minister to such an enterprise?
And here you be now placed in your owne,
Amyd your frendes, your vassalles and your strength,
We shall defende and kepe your person safe,

Ta

Till either counsell turne his tender minde,
Or age, or sorrow end his wretie dayes.
But if the feare of Goddes, and secrete grudge
Of natures law, repining at the fact,
withholde your courage from so great attempt:
Know ye, that lust of kingdomes hath no law.
The Goddes do beare and well allow in kinges,
The thinges they abhorre in ralcall routes.
, when kinges on slender quarrells runne to warres,
, And then in cruell and vnkindely wise,
, Commaund theftes, rapes, murders of innocentes,
, The spoile of townes, ruines of mighty realmes:
, Thinke you such princes do suppose them selues
, Subiect to lawes of kinde, and feare of Gods:
Murders and violent theftes in priuate men,
Are hainous crimes and full of foule reproch,
Yet none offence, but deckt with glorious name
Of noble conquestes, in the handes of kinges.
But if you like not yet so hote deuise,
Ne list to take such vauntage of the time,
But though with perill of your owne estate,
You will not be the first that shall inuade:
Assemble yet your force for your defence,
And for your saferie stand vpon your garde.

Dordan. O heauen was there euer heard or knowen,
So wicked counsell to a noble prince?
Let me (my Lorde) disclose vnto your grace
This hainous tale, what mischiefe it containes,
Your fathers death, your brothers and your owne,
Your present murder and eternall shame.
Beare me (O king) and suffer not to sinke
So high a treason in your princely brest.

Ferrex. The mightie Goddes forbid that euer I
Should once conceaue such mischiefe in my hart.

Although my brother hath bereft my realme,
And beare perhappes to me an hatefull minde:
Shall I reuenge it, with his death therefore?
Or shall I so destroy my fathers life
That gaue me life? the Gods forbid, I say.
Cease you to speake so any more to me.
Ne you my frend with answere once repeate
So foule a tale. In silence let it die.
What lord or subiect shall haue hope at all,
That vnder me they safely shall enioye
Their goods, their honours, landes and liberties,
With whom, neither one onely brother deare,
Ne father dearer, could enioye their liues?
But sith, I feare my yonger brothers rage,
And sith perhappes some other man may geue
Some like aduise, to moue his grudging head
At mine estate, which counsell may perchaunce
Take greater force with him, than this with me,
I will in secrete so prepare my selfe,
As if his malice or his lust to reigne
Breake forth in armes or sodeine violence,
I may withstand his rage and keepe mine owne.

Dordan. I feare the fatall time now draweth on,
when ciuil hate shall end the noble line
Of famous Brute and of his royall seede.
Great Ioue defend the mischiefes now at hand.
O that the Secretaries wise aduise
Had erst bene heard when he beseought the king
Not to diuide his land, nor send his sonnes
To further partes from presence of his court,
Ne yet to yelde to them his gouernaunce.
Lo such are they now in the royall throne
As was rashe Phaeton in Phebus carre.
Ne then the fiery stedes did draw the flame

with wilder rancor through the kindled skies,
Than traiterous counsell now will whirle about
The youthfull heades of these vnskilfull kinges.
But if her of their father will enforme,
The reuerence of him perhappes shall stay
The growing mischeifes, while they yet are greene.
If this helpe not, then woe vnto them selues,
The prince, the people, the diuided land.

Actus secundus. *Scena secunda.*

Porrex. Tyndar. Philander.

PORREX. And is it thus? And doth he so prepare,
Against his brother as his mortall foe?
And now while yet his aged father liues?
Neither regardes he him: nor feares he me?
warre would he haue: and he shall haue it so.

Tyndar. I saw my selfe the great prepared store
Of horse, of armour, and of weapon there,
Ne bring I to my lorde reported tales
without the ground of seen and searched trouth.
Loe secrete quatrels runne about his court,
To bring the name of you my lorde in hate.
Eche man almost can now debate the cause,
And aske a reason of so great a wrong,
why he so noble and so wise a prince,
Is as vnworthy reft his heritage?
And why the king, mislededde by craftie meanes,
Diuided thus his land from course of right?
The wiser sort holde downe their griefull heades,
Eche man withdrawes from talke and company,
Of those that haue bene knowne to fauour you.

To hide the mischiefe of their meaning there,
Rumours are spread of your preparing here.
The rascall numbers of vnskilfull sort
Are filled with monstrous tales of you and yours.
In secrete I was counselled by my frendes,
To hast me thence, and brought you as you know
Letters from those, that both can truely tell,
And would not write vnlesse they knew it well.

Philand. My lord, yet ere you moue vnkindly warre,
Send to your brother to demaund the cause.
Perhappes some traitorous tales haue filled his eares
With false reportes against your noble grace:
Which once disclosed, shall end the growing strife,
That els not stayed with wise foresight in time
Shall hazarde both your kingdomes and your lines.
Send to your father eke, he shall appease
Your kindled mindes, and rid you of this feare.

Porrex. Ridde me of feare? I feare him not at all:
Ne will to him, ne to my father send.
If danger were for one to tary there,
Thinke ye it safetie to returne againe?
In mischiefes, such as Ferrex now intendes,
The wonted courteous lawes to messengers
Are not obserued, which in iust warre they vse.
Shall I so hazard any one of mine?
Shall I betray my trusty frendes to him,
That haue disclosed his treason vnto me?
Let him entreate that feares, I feare him not.
Or shall I to the king my father send?
Yea and send now, while such a mother lines,
That loues my brother, and that hateth me?
Shall I geue leasure, by my fonde delayes,
To Ferrex to oppresse me all vnware?
I will not, but I will inuade his realme,

And

And seeke the traitour prince within his court.
Mischiefe for mischiefe is a due reward.
His wretched head shall pay the worthy price
Of this his treason and his hate to me.
Shall I abide, and treate, and send and pray,
And holde my yelden throate to traitours knife?
while I with valiant minde and conquering force,
Might rid my selfe of foes: and winne a realme?
Yet rather, when I haue the wretches head,
Then to the king my father will I send.
The bootelesse case may yet appeale his wrath:
If not, I will defend me as I may.

Philand. Lo here the end of these two youthful kings,
The fathers death, the ruine of their realmes.
„ O most vnhappy state of counsellers,
„ That light on so vnhappy lordes and times,
„ That neither can their good aduise be heard,
„ Yet must they beare the blames of ill successe.
But I will to the king their father haste,
Ere this mischiefe come to the likely end,
That if the mindfull wrath of wrekefull Gods,
Since mightie Ilions fall not yet appealed
with these poore remnantes of the Troian name,
Haue not determined by vnmoued fate
Out of this realme to rase the Brittishe line,
By good aduise, by awe of fathers name,
By force of wiser lordes, this kindled hate
May yet be quenched, ere it consume vs all.

Chorus. When youth not bridled with a guiding stay
Is left to random of their owne delight,
And welds whole realmes, by force of soueraign sway,
Great is the daunger of vnmaistred might,

Lest skilleſſe rage throwe downe with headlong fall
Their lands, their states, their liues, them ſelues & al,
When growing pride doth fill the ſwelling breſt,
And gredy luſt doth rayſe the climbing minde,
Oh hardlie maye the perill be repreſt,
Ne feare of angrie Goddes, ne lawes kinde.
Ne countries care can fiered hartes reſtrayne,
Whan force hath armes enuie and disdaine.
When kinges of forefette will neglect the rede
Of best aduiſe, and yelde to pleaſing tales,
That do their fanſies noysome humour feede,
Ne reaſon, nor regarde of right auailes.
Succeding heapes of plagues ſhall teach to late,
To learne the miſchiefes of miſguided ſtate.
Fowle fall the traitour falſe, that vndermines
The loue of brethren to deſtroye them both.
Wo to the prince, that pliant eare enclynes,
And yeldes his mind to poyſonous tale, that floweth
From flattering mouth. And woe to wretched land
That waſtes it ſelfe with ciuil ſworde in hand.
Loe, thus it is, poyſon in golde to take,
And holſome drinke in homely cuppe forſake.

¶ The order and ſignification of the domme ſhewe before the thirde act.

¶ Firſte the muſicke of flutes began to playe, during which came in vpon the ſtage a company of mourners all clad in blacke betokening death and ſorowe to enſue vpon the ill aduiſed miſgouernement and diſcention of brethern, as befell vpon the murderer of Ferrex by his yonger brother. After the mourners had paſſed thryſe about the ſtage, they departed, and than the muſicke ceaſed.

Gorboduc. Eubulus. Aroſtus. Philander. Nuntius.

GOrb. O cruel fates, O mindful wrath of Goddes,
whoſe vengeance neither Simois ſtayned ſtreames
Flowing with bloud of Troian princes ſlaine,
Nor Phrygian fieldes made ranck with corpſes dead
Of Aſian kynges and lordes, can yet appeaſe,
Ne ſlaughter of vnhappie Pryams race,
Nor Ilions fall made leuell with the ſoile.
Can yet ſuffice: but ſtill continued rage
Purſues our lynes, and from the farthеſt ſeas
Doth chaſe the iſſues of deſtroyed Troye.
O no man happie, till his ende be ſeene.
If any flowing wealth and ſeemyng ioye
In preſent yeres might make a happy wight,
Happie was Hecuba the wofulleſt wretch
That euer lyued to make a myrrour of,
And happie Pryam with his noble ſonnes.
And happie I, till nowe alas I ſee
And feele my moſt vnhappye wretchednеſſe.
Beholde my lordes, read ye this letter here.
Loe it conteins the ruine of our realme,
If timelie ſpeede prouide not haſtie helpe.
Yet (O ye Goddes) if euer wofull kyng
Might moue ye kings of kinges, wreke it on me
And on my ſonnes, not on this giltleſſe realme.
Send down your waſting flames frō wrathful ſkies,
To reue me and my ſonnes the hatefull breath.
Read, read my lordes: this is the matter why
I called ye nowe to haue your good aduyſe.

¶ The letter from Dordan the Counsellour of the elder prince.

Eubulus readeth the letter.

My soueraigne lord, what I am loth to write,
But lothest am to see, that I am forced
By letters nowe to make you vnderstande.
My lord Ferrex your eldest sonne misledde
By traitorous fraude of yong vntempred wittes,
Assembleth force agaynst your yonger sonne,
Ne can my counsell yet withdrawe the heate
And furyous panges of hys enflamed head.
Disdaine (sayth he) of his disheritance
Armes him to wreke the great pretended wrong,
With ciuyll swoord vpon his brothers life.
If present helpe do not restraine this rage,
This flame will waste your sonnes, your land, & you.

Your maiesties faithfull and most
humble subiect Dordan.

Arostus. O king, appeale your griefe and stay your
Great is the matter, and a wofull case. (plaint.
But timely knowledge may bring timely helpe.
Sende for them both vnto your presence here.
The reuerence of your honourage, and state,
Your graue aduice, the awe of fathers name,
Shall quicklie knit agayne this broken peace.
And if in either of my lordes your sonnes,
Be suche vntamed and vnyelding pride,
As will not bende vnto your noble hestes:
If Ferrex the elder sonne can beare no peere,
Or Porrex not content, aspires to more

Then

Than yon him gaue aboue his native right:
Joyne with the fuller syde, so shall you force
Them to agree, and holde the lande in stay.

Eub. What meaneth this? Loe yonder comes in hast
Philander from my lord your yonger sonne.

Gorb. The Goddes sende ioyfull newes.

Phil. The mightie Ioue
Preserue your maiestie, O noble king.

Gorb. Philander, welcome: but how doth my sonne?

Phil. Your sonne, sir, lyues, and healthie I him left.
But yet (O king) the want of lustfull health
Could not be halfe so grieuefull to your grace,
As these most wretched tidynges that I bryng.

Gorb. O heauens, yet more? not ende of woes to me?

Phil. Tyndar, O king, came lately from the court
Of Ferrex, to my lord your yonger sonne,
And made reporte of great prepared store
For warre, and sayth that it is wholly ment
Agaynst Porrex, for high disdayne that he
Lyues now a king and egall in degree
with him, that claimeth to succede the whole,
As by due title of discending right.
Porrex is nowe so set on flaming fire,
Partely with kindled rage of cruell wrath,
Partely with hope to gaine a realme thereby,
That he in hast prepareth to invade
His brothers land, and with vnkindely warre
Threatens the murder of your elder sonne,
Me could I him perswade that first he should
Send to his brother to demaunde the cause,
Lo, yet to you to staie this hatefull strife.

wherfore sithe there no more I can be hearde,
I come my selfe now to entreate your grace,
And to beseche you, as you loue the life
And safetie of your children and your realme,
Now to employ your wisdome and your force
To stay this mischiefe ere it be to late.

Gorb. Are they in armes? would he not sende to me?
Is this the honour of a fathers name?
In vaine we trauaile to asswage their mindes,
As if their hartes, whome neither brothers loue,
Nor fathers awe, nor kingdomes cares, can moue,
Our counsels could withdraw from raging heat.
Ioue slay them both, and cud the cursed line.
For though perhappes feare of such mightie force
As I my lordes, ioyned with your noble aides,
Maye yet raise, shall represse their present heate,
The secret grudge and malice will remayne,
The fire not quenched, but kept in close restraint,
Fedde still within, breakes forth with double flame.
Their death and myne must peaze the angrie Gods

Phil. Yelde not, O king, so much to weake dispeire.
Your sonnes yet lyue, and long I trust, they shall.
If fates had taken you from earthly life,
Before beginning of this ciuyll strife:
Perhaps your sonnes in their vnmaistered youth,
Loose from regarde of any lyuing wight,
would runne on headlong, with vnbridled race,
To their owne death and ruine of this realme.
But sith the Gods, that haue the care for kinges.
Of thinges and times dispose the order so,
That in your life this kindled flame breakes forth,
while yet your lyfe, your wisdome, and your power.
May stay the growing mischiefe, and represse
The fierie blaze of their inkindled heate:

It

It seemes, and so ye ought to deeme thereof,
That louyng loue hath tempted so the time
Of this debate to happen in your dayes,
That you yet lyuing may the same appeaze,
And adde it to the glory of your latter age,
And they our sonnes may learne to liue in peace.
Beware (O king) the greatest harme of all,
Lest by your wayleſull plaints your hastened death
Yelde larger roume vnto their growing rage.
Preserue your life, the onely hope of stay.
And if your highnes herein list to vse
wisdome or force, counsell or knightly aide:
Loe we, our persons, powers and lyues are yours,
Vse vs tyll death, O king, we are your owne.

Eub. Loe here the perill that was erst foresene,
when you, (O king) did first deuide your lande,
And yelde your present reigne vnto your sonnes,
But now (O noble prince) now is no time
To waile and plaine, and wast your wofull life.
Now is the time for present good aduise.
Sorow doth darke the iudgement of the wytte.
„ The hart vnbroken and the courage free
„ From feble faintnesse of booteleſse delpeire,
„ Doth either ryse to safetie or renowme
„ By noble valure of vnmanquisht minde,
„ Or yet doth perishe in more happy sort.
Your grace may send to either of your sonnes
Some one both wise and noble personage,
which with good counsell and with weightie name,
Of father, shall present before their eyes
Your best, your life, your safetie and their owne,
The present mischiefe of their deadly strife.
And in the while, assemble you the force
which your commaundement and the spedy hast

Of all my lordes here present can prepare.
The terrour of your mightie power shall stay
The rage of both, or yet of one at lest.

Nun. O king the greatest griefe that euer prince dyd
That euer wofull messenger did tell, (heare,
That euer wretched lande hath sene before,
I bryng to you. Porrex your yonger sonne
with soden force, inuaded hath the lande
That you to Ferrex did allotte to rule,
And with his owne most bloudy hand he hath
His brother slaine, and doth possesse his realme.

Gorb. O heauens send down the flames of your re-
Destroy I say with flash of wrekefull fier (uenge,
The traitour sonne, and then the wretched sire.
But let vs go, that yet perhappes I may
Die with reuenge, and peaze the hatefull gods.

Chor. The lust of kingdome knowes no sacred faith,
No rule of reason, no regarde of right,
No kindely loue, no feare of heauens wrath:
But with contempt of Goddes, and mans despite,
Through blodie slaughter, doth prepare the waies
To fatall scepter and accursed reigne.
The sonne so lothes the fathers lingering daies,
Ne dreades his hand in brothers blode to staine.
O wretched prince, ne doest thou yet recorde
The yet fresh murthers done within the lande
Of thy forefathers, when the cruell sworde
Berett Morgan his life with cosyns hand?
Thus fatall plagues pursue the giltie race,
whose murderous hand imbrued with giltlesse blood
Askes vengeaunce still before the heauens face,
with endlesse mischiefes on the cursed broode.

The

The wicked childe thus bringes to wofull fire
The mournefull plaintes, to waſt his very life.
Thus do the cruell flames of ciuyll fier
Deſtroy the parted reigne with hatefull ſtrife.
And hence doth ſpring the well from which doth flow
The dead black ſtreames of mourning, plaints & woe.

¶ The order and ſignification of the domme ſhew before the fourth act.

¶ Firſt the muſick of Howboies begã to plaie, during which there came from vnder the ſtage, as though out of hell three furies. Alecto, Megera, and Teſiphone, clad in black garmentes ſprinkled with bloud and flames, their bodies girt with ſnakes, their heds ſpred with ſerpentes in ſtead of heare, the one bearing in her hand a Snake, the other a whip, and the third a burning Firebrand: each driuing before them a king and a queene, which moued by furies vnnaturally had ſlaine their owne children. The names of the kings and queenes were theſe. Tantalus, Medea, Athamas, Ino, Cambiſes, Althea, after that the furies and theſe had paſſed about the ſtage thrise, they departed and than the muſicke ceaſed: hereby was ſignified the vnnaturall murders to follow, that is to ſay. Pyrrex ſlaine by his owne mother. And of king Gorbodue and queene Viden, killed by their owne ſubiectes.

Actus quartus. *Scena prima.*

Viden ſola.

VId. why ſhould I lyue, and linger forth my time
In longer life to double my diſtreſſe?
O me moſt wofull wight, whom no miſhappe

Long ere this day could haue bereued hence.
Mought not these handes by fortune, or by fate,
Haue perst this brest, and life with iron reft:
Or in this palace here, where I so long
Haue spent my daies, could not that happie houre
Once, once haue hapt in which these hugie frames
with death by fall might haue oppressed me?
Or should not this most hard and cruell sorte,
So oft where I haue prest my wretched steps,
Sometime had ruthe of myne accursed life,
To rende in twayne swallow me therin?
So had my bones possessed now in peace
Their happie graue within the closed grounde,
And greadie wormes had gnawen this pyned hart
without my feeling payne: so should not now
This lyuing brest remayne the ruthefull tombe,
wherin my hart yelden to death is graued:
Nor direry thoughts with panges of pining griefe
My dolefull minde had not afflicted thus.
O my beloued sonne: O my sweete childe,
My deare Ferrex, my ioye, my lyues delyght.
Is my beloued sonne, is my sweete childe,
My deare Ferrex, my ioye, my lyues delight.
Murdered with cruell death? O hatefull wretch,
O heynous traitour both to heauen and earth.
Thou Porrex, thou this damned dede hast wrought,
Thou Porrex, thou shalt dearely bye the same.
Traitour to kinne and kinde, to sire and me,
To thine owne flesh, and traitour to thy selfe.
The Gods on thee in hell shall wreke their wrath,
And here in earth this hand shall take reuenge,
On thee Porrex, thou false and caitife wight.
If after bloud, so eigre were thy thirst,
And murderous minde had so possessed thee,
If such hard hart of rocke and stonie flint

Lined

Lined in thy breſt, that nothing els could like
Thy cruell tyrantes thought but death and bloud:
wilde ſauage beaſts, mought not their ſlaughter ſerue
To fede thy gredie will, and in the middeſt
Of their entrailes to ſtaine thy deadly handes
with bloud deſerued, and drinke therof thy fill:
Or if nought els but death and bloud of man
Mought pleaſe thy luſt, could none in Britaine land,
whoſe hart betorne out of his panting breſt
with thine owne hand, or worke what death thou
Suffice to make a ſacrifice to peaze (wouldeſt,
That deadly minde and murderous thought in thee?
But he who in the ſelfe ſame wombe was wrapped,
where thou in diſmall bower receiuedſt life?
Or if nedes, nedes, thy hand muſt ſlaughter make,
Moughteſt thou not haue reached a mortall wound,
And with thy ſword haue pearſed this curſed wombe,
That the accurſed Porrex brought to light,
And geuen me a iuſt reward therefore?
So Ferrex yet ſweete life mought haue enioyed,
And to his aged father comfort brought,
with ſome yong ſonne in whom they both might liue.
But whereunto waſte I this ruthfull ſpeche,
To thee that haſt thy brothers bloud thus ſhed?
Shall I ſtill rhinke that frō this wombe thou ſprong?
That I thee bare? or take thee for my ſonne?
No traitour, no: I thee refuſe for mine,
Murderer I thee renounce, thou art not mine.
Neuer, O wretch, this wombe conceiued thee,
Nor neuer bode I painfull throwes for thee.
Changeling to me thou art, and not my childe,
Nor to no wight, that ſparke of pitie knew.
Ruthleſſe, vnkinde, monſter of natures worke,
Thou neuer ſuckt the milke of womans breſt,
But from thy birth the cruell Tigers teates

Haue nurſed thee, nor yet of fleſhe and blood
Founde is thy hart, but of hard iron wrought,
And wilde and deſert woods bredde thee to life.
But canſt thou hope to ſcape my iuſt reuenge?
Or that theſe handes will not be wrooke on thee?
Doeſt thou not know that Ferrex mother liues
That loued him more dearly than her ſelfe?
And doth ſhe liue, and is not venged on thee?

Actus quartus. *Scena ſecunda.*

Gorboduc. Aroſtus. Eubulus. Porrex. Marcella.

GOrb. We maruell much wherto this lingring ſtay
Falles out ſo long: Porrex vnto our court
By order of our letters is returned,
And Eubulus reccaued from vs by heſt
At his arriuall here to geue him charge
Before our preſence ſtraight to make repaire,
And yet we haue no worde whereof he ſtayes.

Aroſtus. Lo where he commes & Eubulus with him.

Eubulus. According to your highneſſe heſt to me,
Here haue I Porrex brought euen in ſuch ſort
As from his wearied horſe he did alight,
For that your grace did will ſuch haſt therein.

Gorboduc. We like and praiſe this ſpedy will in you,
To worke the thing that to your charge we gaue.
Porrex, if we ſo farre ſhould ſwarue from kinde,
And from thoſe boundes which lawe of nature ſets,
As thou haſt done by vile and wretched deede,
In cruell murder of thy brothers life,
Our preſent hand could ſtay no longer time,
But ſtraight ſhould bathe this blade in blood of thee

As

As iuſt reuenge of thy deteſted crime.
No: we ſhould not offend the lawe of kinde,
If now this ſworde of ours did ſlay thee here:
For thou haſt murdered him, whoſe heinous death
Euen natures force doth moue vs to reuenge
By bloud againe: and iuſtice forceth vs
To meaſure death for death, thy due deſert.
yet ſithens thou art our childe, and ſith as yet
In this hard caſe what worde thou canſt alledge
For thy defence, by vs hath not bene heard,
we are content to ſtaye our will for that
which iuſtice biddes vs preſently to worke,
And geue thee leaue to vſe thy ſpeche at full
If ought thou haue to lay for thine excuſe.

Porrex. Neither O king, I can or will denie
But that this hand from Ferrex life hath reft:
which fact how much my dolefull hart doth waile,
Oh would it mought as full appeare to ſight
As inward griefe doth poure it forth to me.
So yet perhappes if euer ruthefull hart
Melting in teares within a manly breſt,
Through depe repentance of his bloudy fact,
If euer griefe, if euer wofull man
Might moue regreite with ſorrowe of his fault,
I thinke the torment of my mournefull caſe
Knowen to your grace, as I do feele the ſame,
would force euen wrath her ſelfe to pitie me.
But as the water troubled with the mudde
Shewes not the face which cls the eye ſhould ſee.
Euen ſo your irefull minde with ſtirred thought,
Can not ſo perfectly diſcerne my cauſe.
But this vnhappe, amongeſt ſo many heapes,
I muſt content me with, moſt wretched man,
That to my ſelfe I muſt reſerue my woe

In pining thoughtes of mine accursed fact,
Since I may not shewe here my smallest griefe
Such as it is, and as my brest endures,
which I esteeme the greatest miserie
Of all mischappes that fortune now can send,
Not that I rest in hope with plaint and teares
To purchase life: for to the Goddes I clepe
For true recorde of this my faithfull speche,
Neuer this hart shall haue the thoughtfull dread
To die the death that by your graces dome
By iust desert, shall be pronounced to me:
Nor neuer shall this tongue once spend the speche
Pardon to crane, or seeke by sute to liue.
I meane not this, as though I were not touchde
with care of dreadfull death, or that I helde
Life in contempt: but that I know, the minde
Stoupes to no dread, although the flesh be fraile,
And for my gilt, I yelde the same so great
As in my selfe I finde a feare to sue
For graunt of life.

Gorboduc. In vaine, O wretch, thou shewest
A wofull hart, Ferrex now lies in graue,
Slaine by thy hand.

Porrex. Yet this, O father, heare:
And then I end. Your maiestie well knowes,
That when my brother Ferrex and my selfe
By your owne hest were ioyned in gouernance
Of this your graces realme of Brittaine land,
I neuer sought nor trauailed for the same,
Nor by my selfe, nor by no frend I wrought,
But from your highnesse will alone it sprong,
Of your most gracious goodnesse bent to me.
But how my brothers hart euen then repined
with swollen disdaine against mine egall rule,

Seing

Seing that realme, which by diſcent ſhould grow
wholly to him, allotted halfe to me?
Euen in your highneſſe court he now remaines,
And with my brother then in neareſt place,
who can recorde, what proofe thereof was ſhewde,
And how my brothers enuious hart appearde.
yet I that iudged it my part to ſeeke
His fauour and good will, and loth to make
your highneſſe know, the thing which ſhould haue
Grief to your grace, & your offence to him, (brought
Hoping my earneſt ſute ſhould ſoone haue wonne
A louing hart within a brothers breſt,
wrought in that ſort that for a pledge of loue
And faithfull hart, he gaue to me his hand.
This made me thinke, that he had baniſht quite
All rancour from his thought and bare to me
Such hartie loue, as I did owe to him.
But after once we left your graces court,
And from your highneſſe preſence liued apart,
This egall rule ſtill, ſtill, did grudge him ſo
That now thoſe enuious ſparkes which erſt lay raked
In liuing cinders of diſſembling breſt,
Kindled ſo farre within his hart diſdaine,
That longer could he not refraine from proofe
Of ſecrete practiſe to depriue me life
By poyſons force, and had bereft me ſo,
If mine owne ſeruant hired to this fact
And moued by trouth with hate to worke the ſame,
In time had not bewrayed it vnto me.
whan thus I ſawe the knot of loue vnknitte,
All honeſt league and faithfull promiſe broke,
The law of kinde and trouth thus rent in twaine,
His hart on miſchiefe ſet, and in his breſt
Blacke treaſon hid, then, then did I deſpeire
That euer time could winne him frend to me.

Then saw I how he smiled with slaying knife
Wrapped vnder cloke, then saw I depe deceite
Lurke in his face and death prepared for me:
Euen nature moued me than to holde my life
More deare to me than his, and bad this hand,
Since by his life my death must nedes ensue,
And by his death my life to be preserued,
To shed his bloud, and seeke my safetie so.
And wisedome willed me without protract
In spedie wise to put the same in vre.
Thus haue I tolde the cause that moued me
To worke my brothers death and so I yeld
My life, my death, to iudgement of your grace.

Gorb. Oh cruell wight, should any cause prevaile
To make thee staine thy hands with brothers bloud:
But what of thee we will resolue to doe,
Shall yet remaine vnknowen: Thou in the meane
Shalt from our royall presence banisht be,
Vntill our princely pleasure further shall
To thee be shewed. Depart therefore our sight
Accursed childe. What cruell destenie,
What froward fate hath sorted vs this chaunce,
That euen in those where we should comfort find,
Where our delight now in our aged dayes
Sould rest and be, euen there our onely griefe
And depest sorrowes to abridge our life,
Most pyning cares and deadly thoughts do grow:

Aros. Your grace should now in these graue yeres of
Haue found ere this ỳ price of mortall ioyes, (yours
How short they be, how fading here in earth,
How full of chaunge, how brittle our estate,
Of nothing sure, saue onely of the death,
To whom both man and all the world doth owe
Their end at last, neither should natures power

In

In other sort against your hart prevaile,
Than as the naked hand whose stroke assayes
The armed brest where force doth light in vaine.

Gorbod. Many can yelde right sage and graue aduise
Of pacient spirite to others wrapped in woe,
And can in speche both rule and conquere kinde,
who if by proofe they might feele natures force,
would shew them selues men as they are in dede,
which now wil nedes be gods. But what doth meane
The sory chere of her that here doth come?

Marcella. Oh where is ruth? or where is pitie now?
whether is gentle hart and mercy fled?
Are they exiled out of our stony brestes,
Neuer to make returne? is all the world
Drowned in blood, and soncke in crueltie?
If not in women mercy may be found,
If not (alas) within the mothers brest,
To her owne childe, to her owne flesh and blood,
If ruthe be banished thence, if pitie there
May haue no place, if there no gentle hart
Do liue and dwell, where should we seeke it then?

Gorb. Madame (alas) what meanes your woful tale?

Marcella. O sillie woman I, why to this houre
Haue kinde and fortune thus deferred my breath,
That I should liue to see this dolefull day?
will euer wight beleue that such hard hart
Could rest within the cruell mothers brest,
With her owne hand to slay her onely sonne?
But out (alas) these eyes beheld the same,
They saw the direry sight, and are become
Most ruthfull recordes of the bloudy fact.
Porrex (alas) is by his mother slaine,
And with her hand, a wofull thing to tell,

While slumbring on his carefull bed he rested
His hart stabde in with knife is reft of life.

Gorboduc. O Eubulus, oh draw this sword of ours,
And pearce this hart with speed. O hatefull light,
O lothsome life, O sweete and welcome death.
Deare Eubulus worke this we thee beseech.

Eubulus. Patient your grace, perhappes he liueth yet,
With wound receaued, but not of certaine death.

Gorboduc. O let vs then repayre vnto the place,
And see if Porrex liue, or thus be slaine.

Marcella. Alas he liueth not, it is to true,
That with these eyes of him a pereleſſe prince,
Sonne to a king, and in the flower of youth,
Euen with a twinke a senseleſſe stocke I saw.

Arostus. O damned deede.

Marcella. But heare hys ruthefull end.
The noble prince, pearst with the sodeine wound,
Out of his wretched slumber hastely start,
whose strength now fayling straight he ouerthrew,
when in the fall his eyes euen new vnclosed
Beheilde the Queene, and cryed to her for helpe.
we then, alas, the ladies which that time
Did there attend, seing that heynous deede,
And hearing him oft call the wretched name
Of mother, and to crye to her for aide,
whose direfull hand gaue him the mortall wound,
Pitying (alas) for nought els could we do)
His ruthefull end, ranne to the wofull bedde,
Dispoyled straight his brest, and all we might
wiped in vaine with napkins next at hand,
The sodeine streames of bloud that flushed fast
Out of the gaping wound. O what a looke,

O what

O what a ruthefull stedfast eye me thought
He fixt vpon my face, which to my death
will neuer part fro me, when with a braide
A deepe fet sigh he gaue, and therewithall
Clasping his handes, to heauen he cast his sight.
And straight pale death pressing within his face
The flying ghost his mortall corpes forsooke.

Arostus. Neuer did age bring forth so vile a fact.

Marcella. O hard and cruell happe, that thus assigned
Vnto so worthy a wight so wretched end:
But most hard cruell hart, that could consent
To lend the hatefull destenies that hand,
By which, alas, so heynous crime was wrought.
O Queene of adamant, O marble brest.
If not the fauour of his comely face,
If not his princely chere and countenance,
His valiant actiue armes, his manly brest,
If not his faire and seemely personage,
His noble limmes in such proportion cast
As would haue wapt a sillie womans thought,
If this mought not haue moued thy bloudy hart.
And that most cruell hand the wretched weapon
Euen to let fall, and kisse him in the face,
with teares for ruthe to reaue such one by death:
Should nature yet consent to slay her sonne?
O mother, thou to murder thus thy childe?
Euen Ioue with iustice must with lightning flames
Frō heauen send downe some strange reuenge on thee.
Ah noble prince, how oft haue I beheld
Thee mounted on thy fierce and traumpling stede,
Shining in armour bright before the tilt,
And with thy mistresse sleue tied on thy helme,
And charge thy staffe to please thy ladies eye,
That bowed the head peece of thy frendly foe?

How

How oft in armes on horse to bend the mace?
How oft in armes on foote to breake the sworde,
which neuer now these eyes may see againe.

Arostus. Madame, alas, in vaine these plaints are shed,
Rather with me depart, and helpe to swage,
The thoughtfull griefes that in the aged king
Must needes by nature growe, by death of this
His onely sonne, whom he did holde so deare.

Marcella. what wight is that which saw ẏ I did see,
And could refraine to waile with plaint and teares?
Not I, alas, that hart is not in me.
But let vs goe, for I am greued anew,
To call to minde the wretched fathers woe.

Chorus. When greedy lust in royall seate to reigne
Hath rest all care of Goddes and eke of men,
And cruell hart, wrath, treason, and disdaine
within ambicious brest are lodged, then
Beholde how mischiefe wide her selfe displayes,
And with the brothers hand the brother slayes.
when bloud thus shed, doth staine the heauens face,
Crying to Ioue for vengeance of the deede,
The mightie God euen moueth from his place,
with wrath to wreke: then sendes he forth with spede
The dreadfull furies, daughters of the night,
with Serpentes girt, carying the whip of ire,
with heare of stinging Snakes, and shining bright
with flames and bloud, and with a brand of fire.
These for reuenge of wretched murder done,
Do make the mother kill her onely sonne.
Blood asketh blood, and death must death requite.
Ioue by his iust and euerlasting dome
Iustly hath euer so requited it.

The

The times before recorde, and times to come
Shall finde it true, and so doth present proofe
Present before our eyes for our behoofe.
O happy wight that suffres not the snare
Of murderous minde to tangle him in blood.
And happy he that can in time beware
By others harmes and turne it to his good.
But wo to him that fearing not to offend
Doth serue his lust, and will not see the end,

¶ The order and signification of the domme shew before the fifth act.

¶ First the drommes & fluites, began to sound, during which there came forth vpon the stage a company of Hargabusiers and of Armed men all in order of battaile. These after their peeces discharged, and that the armed men had three times marched about the stage, departed, and then the drommes and fluits did cease. Hereby was signified tumults, rebellions, armes and ciuill warres to follow, as fell in the realme of great Brittayne, which by the space of fiftie yeares & more continued in ciuill warre betweene the nobilitie after the death of king Gorboduc, and of his issues, for want of certayne limitacion in succession of the crowne, till the time of Dumvallo Molmutius, who reduced the land to monarchie.

Actus quintus. *Scena prima.*

Clotyn. Mandud. Gwenard. Fergus. Eubulus.

Clot. Did euer age bring forth such tirants harts?
The brother hath bereft the brothers life,
The mother she hath died her cruell handes
In blood of her owne sonne, and now at last
The people loe forgetting trouth and loue,

Contemning quite both law and loyall hart,
Euen they haue slaine their soueraigne lord & queene.

Mand. Shall this their traitorous crime vnpunished
Euen yet they cease not, caryed on with rage, (rest:
In their rebellious routes, to threaten still
A new bloud shed vnto the princes kinne,
To slay them all, and to vproote the race
Both of the king and queene, so are they moued
With Porrex death, wherin they falsely charge
The guiltlesse king without desert at all,
And traitorously haue murdered him therfore,
And eke the queene.

Gwena. Shall subiectes dare with force
To worke reuenge vpon their princes fact?
Admit the worst that may, as sure in this
The deede was fowle, the queene to slay her sonne,
Shall yet the subiect seeke to take the swoorde,
Arise agaynst his lord, and slay his king?
O wretched state, where those rebellious hartes
Are not rent out euen from their liuing breastes,
And with the body throwen vnto the foules
As carrion foode, for terrour of the rest.

Ferg. There can no punishment be thought to great
For this so greuous crime: let spede therfore
Be vsed therin for it behoueth so.

Eubulus. Ye all my lordes, I see, consent in one
And I as one consent with ye in all.
I holde it more than neede with sharpest law
To punish this tumultuous bloudy rage.
For nothing more may shake the common state,
Than sufferance of vproares without redresse,
Wherby how some kingdomes of mightie power
After great conquestes made, and flourishing

In

In fame and wealth, haue ben to ruine brought,
I pray to Ioue that we may rather wayle
Such happe in them than witnesse in our selues.
Eke fully with the duke my minde agrees,
Though kinges forget to gouerne as they ought,
yet subiectes must obey as they are bounde.
But now my lordes, before ye farder wade,
Or spend your speach, what sharpe reuenge shall fall
By iustice plague on these rebellious wightes,
Me thinkes ye rather should first search the way,
By which in time the rage of this vproare
Mought be repressed, and these great tumults ceased.
Euen yet the life of Brittayne land doth hang
In traitours balaunce of vnegall weight.
Thinke not my lordes the death of Gorboduc,
Nor yet Videnaes bloud will cease their rage:
Euen our owne lynes, our wiues and children deare,
Our countrey dearest of all, in daunger standes,
Now to be spoiled, now, now made desolate,
And by our selues a conquest to ensue.
For geue once sway vnto the peoples lustes,
To rush forth on, and stay them not in time,
And as the streame that rowleth downe the hyll,
So will they headlong ronne with raging thoughtes
From bloud to bloud, from mischiefe vnto moe,
To ruine of the realme, them selues and all,
So giddy are the common peoples mindes,
So glad of chaunge, more wauering than the sea.
Ye see (my lordes) what strength these rebelles haue,
what hugie nombre is assembled still,
For though the traiterous fact, for which they rose
Be wrought and done, yet lodge they still in field
So that how farre their furies yet will stretch
Great cause we haue to dreade. That we may seeke
By present battaile to represse their power,

Speede must we vse to leuie force therfore.
For either they forthwith will mischiefe worke,
Or their rebellious roares forthwith will cease.
These violent thinges may haue no lasting long.
Let vs therfore vse this for present helpe,
Perswade by gentle speach, and offre grace
With gift of pardon saue vnto the chiefe,
And that vpon condicion that forthwith
They yelde the captaines of their enterprise,
To beare such guerdon of their traiterous fact,
As may be both due vengeance to them selues,
And holsome terrour to posteritie.
This shall, I thinke, scatter the greatest part,
That now are holden with desire of home,
Wearied in field with cold of winters nightes,
And some (no doubt) striken with dread of law.
When this is once proclamed, it shall make
The captaines to mistrust the multitude,
Whose saferie biddes them to betray their heads,
And so much more bycause the rascall routes,
In thinges of great and perillous attemptes,
Are neuer trustie to the noble race.
And while we treate and stand on termes of grace,
We shall both stay their furies rage the while,
And eke gaine time, whose onely helpe sufficeth
Without en warre to vanquish rebelles power
In the meane while, make you in redynes
Such band of horsemen as ye may prepare.
Horsemen (you know) are not the commons strength,
But are the force and store of noble men,
Wherby the vnchosen and vnarmed sort
Of skilleſſe rebelles, whome none other power
But nombre makes to be of dreadfull force,
With sodeyne brunt may quickely be oppreſt.
And if this gentle meane of proffered grace,

With

with ſtubborne hartes cannot ſo ſharpe auayle,
As to aſſwage their deſperate courages.
Then do I wiſh ſuch ſlaughter to be made,
As preſent age and eke poſteritie
May be adrad with horrour of reuenge,
That iuſtly then ſhall on theſe rebelles fall.
This is my lord the ſumme of mine aduiſe.

Clotyn. Neither this caſe admittes debate at large,
And though it did, this ſpeach that hath ben layd
Hath well abridged the tale I would haue tolde.
Fully with Eubulus do I conſent
In all that he hath layd: and if the ſame
To you my lordes, may ſeeme for beſt aduiſe,
I wiſh that it ſhould ſtreight be put in vre.

Mandud. My lordes than let vs preſently depart,
And follow this that liketh vs ſo well.

Fergus. If euer time to gaine a kingdome here
were offred man, now it is offred mee.
The realme is reft both of their king and queene,
The offſpring of the prince is ſlaine and dead,
No iſſue now remaines, the heire vnknowen,
The people are in armes and mutynies,
The nobles they are buſied how to ceaſe
Theſe great rebellious tumultes and vproares,
And Brittayne land now deſert left alone
Amyd theſe broyles vncertayne where to reſt,
Offers her ſelfe vnto that noble hart
That will or dare purſue to beare her crowne.
Shall I that am the duke of Albanye
Diſcended from that line of noble bloud,
which hath ſo long flouriſhed in worthy fame,
Of valiaunt hartes, ſuch as in noble breſtes
Of right ſhould reſt aboue the the baſer ſort,

Refuse to venture life to winne a crowne?
Whom shall I finde enmies that will withstand
My fact herein, if I attempt by armes
To seeke the same now in these times of hoyle?
These dukes power can hardly well appease
The people that already are in armes.
But if perhappes my force be once in field,
Is not my strength in power aboue the best
Of all these lordes now left in Brittayne land?
And though they should match me with power of mē,
Yet doubtfull is the chaunce of battailles ioyned.
If victors of the field we may depart,
Ours is the scepter then of great Brittayne.
If slayne amid the playne this body lye,
Mine enemies yet shall not deny me this,
But that I dyed geuing the noble charge
To hazarde life for conquest of a crowne.
Forthwith therefore will I in post depart
To Albanye, and raise in armour there
All power I can: and here my secret friendes,
By secret practise shall sollicite still,
To seeke to wynne to me the peoples hartes.

Actus quintus. *Scena secunda.*

Eubulus. Clotyn. Mandud. Gwenard. Arostus. Nuntius.

EVb. O Ioue, how are these peoples harts abusde?
what blind fury, thus headlong caries them?
That though so many bookes, so many rolles
Of auncient time recorde, what grieuous plagues
Light on these rebelles aye, and though so oft
Their eares haue heard their aged fathers tell,

what

what iuste reward these traitours still receyue,
yea though them selues haue sene depe death & blond,
By strangling cord and slaughter of the sword,
To such assigned, yet can they not beware,
yet can not stay their lewde rebellious handes,
But suffring loe fowle treason to distaine
Their wretched myndes, forget their loyall hart,
Reiect all truth and rise against their prince.
A ruthefull case, that those, whom duties bond,
whom grafted law by nature, truth, and faith,
Bound to preserue their countrey and their king,
Borne to defend their common wealth and prince,
Euen they should geue consent thus to subuert
Thee Buttaine land, & from thy wombe should spring
(O native soile) those, that will needs destroy
And ruyne thee and eke them selues in fine.
For lo, when once the dukes had offred grace
Of pardon sweete, the multitude misledde
By traitorous fraude of their vngracious heades,
One sort that saw the dangerous successe
Of stubborne standing in rebellious warre,
And knew the difference of princes power
From headlesse nombre of tumultuous routes,
whom common countreies care, and priuate feare,
Taught to repent the errour of their rage,
Layde handes vpon the captaines of their band,
And brought them bound vnto the mightie dukes.
And other sort not trusting yet so well
The truth of pardon, or mistrusting more
Their owne offence than that they could conceiue
Such hope of pardon for so foule misdede,
Or for that they their captaines could not yeld,
who fearing to be yelded fled before,
Stale home by silence of the secret night,
The thirde vnhappy and enraged sort

Of desperate hartes, who stained in princes blood
From trayterous furour could not be withdrawen
By loue, by law, by grace, ne yet by feare,
By proffered life, ne yet by threatned death,
With mindes hopelesse of life, dreadlesse of death,
Carelesse of countrey, and aweleſſe of God,
Stoode bent to fight, as furies did them moue,
With violent death to close their traiterous life.
These all by power of horsemen were oppresst,
And with reuenging swoorde slayne in the field,
Or with the strangling cord hangd on the tree,
Where yet their carryen carcases do preach
The fruites that rebelles reape of their vproares,
And of the murder of their sacred prince.
But loe, where do approche the noble dukes,
By whom these tumults haue ben thus appeasde.

Clotyn. I thinke the world will now at length beware
And feare to put on armes agaynst their prince.

Mand. If not: those trayterous hartes that dare rebell,
Let them beholde the wide and hugie fieldes
With blond and bodies spread of rebelles slayne,
The lofty trees clothed with the corpses dead
That strangled with the corde do hang theron.

Aroſtus. A iust reward, such as all times before
Haue euer lotted to those wretched folkes.

Gwen. But what meanes he that commeth here so fast?

Nun. My lordes, as dutie and my trouth doth moue
And of my countrey worke a care in mee,
That if the spending of my breath anailed
To do the seruice that my hart desires,
I would not shunne to imbrace a present death:
So haue I now in that wherein I thought

My

My trauayle mought perfourme some good effect,
Ventred my life to bring these tydinges here.
Fergus the mightie duke of Albanye
Is now in armes and lodgeth in the fielde
with twentie thousand men, hether he bendes
His spedy marche, and mindes to inuade the crowne.
Dayly he gathereth strength, and spreads abrode
That to this realme no certeine heire remaines,
That Brittayne land is left without a guide,
That he the scepter seekes, for nothing els
But to preserue the people and the land,
which now remaine as ship without a sterne.
Loe this is that which I haue here to say.

Cloyton. Is this his fayth? and shall he falsely thus
Abuse the vauntage of vnhappie times?
O wretched land, if his outragious pride,
His cruell and vntempred wilfulnesse,
His deepe dissembling shewes of false pretence,
Should once attaine the crowne of Brittaine land.
Let vs my lordes, with timely force resist
The new attempt of this our common foe,
As we would quench the flames of common fire.

Mand. Though we remaine without a certain prince,
To weld the realme or guide the wandring rule,
Yet now the common mother of vs all,
Our native land, our countrey, that conteines
Our wiues, children, kindred, our selues and all
That euer is or may be deare to man,
Cries vnto vs to helpe our selues and her.
Let vs aduaunce our powers to repelle
This growing foe of all our liberties.

Gwenard. Yea let vs so, my lordes, with hally speede.
And yt (O Goddes) send vs the welcome death,

To shed our blond in field, and leaue vs not
In lothesome life to lenger out our dayes,
To see the hugie heapes of these vnhappes,
That now roll downe vpon the wretched land,
Where emptie place of princely gouernaunce,
No certaine stay now left of doubtlesse heire,
Thus leaue this guideles realme an open pray,
To endelesse stormes and waste of ciuill warre.

Arostus. That ye (my lordes) do so agree in one,
To saue your countrey from the violent reigne
And wrongfully vsurped tyrannie
Of him that threatens conquest of you all,
To saue your realme, and in this realme your selues,
From forreine thraldome of so proud a prince,
Much do I prayse, and I beseech the Goddes,
With happy honour to requite it you.
But (O my lordes) sith now the heauens wrath
Hath reft this land the issue of their prince,
Sith of the body of our late soueraigne lorde
Remaines no moe, since the yong kinges be slaine,
And of the title of discended crowne
Uncertainly the diuerse mindes do thinke
Euen of the learned sort, and more vncertainly
Will parciall fancie and affection decme:
But most vncertainly will climbing pride
And hope of reigne withdraw to sundry partes
The doubtfull right and hopefull lust to reigne:
When once this noble seruice is atchieued
For Brittaine land the mother of ye all,
When once ye haue with armed force repelst
The proude attemptes of this Albanian prince,
That threatens thraldome to your native land,
When ye shall vanquishers returne from field,
And finde the princely state an open pray

To

To gredie lust and to vsurping power,
Then, then (my lordes) if euer kindly care
Of auncient honour of your auncesters,
Of present wealth and nobilesse of your stockes,
yea of the lines and safetie yet to come
Of your deare wiues, your children, and your selues,
Might mone your noble hartes with gentle ruth,
Then, then, haue pitie on the torne estate,
Then helpe to salue the welneare hopelesse sore
which ye shall do, if ye your selues withholde
The slaying knife from your owne mothers throate.
Her shall you saue, and you, and yours in her,
If ye shall all with one assent forbeare
Once to lay hand or take vnto your selues
The crowne, by colour of pretended right,
Or by what other meanes so euer it be,
Till first by common counsell of you all
In Parliament the regall diademe
Be set in certaine place of gouernaunce,
In which your Parliament and in your choise,
Preferre the right (my lordes) with respect
Of strength or frendes, or what soeuer cause
That may set forward any others part.
For right will last, and wrong can not endure.
Right meane I his or hers, vpon whose name
The people rest by meane of native line,
Or by the vertue of some former lawe,
Already made their title to aduaunce.
Such one (my lordes) let be your chosen king,
Such one so borne within your native land,
Such one preferre, and in no wise admitte
The heaue yoke of forreine gouernance,
Let forreine titles yelde to publike wealth.
And with that hart wherewith ye now prepare
Thus to withstand the proude inuading foe,

With that same hart (my lordes) keepe out also
Vnnaturall thraldome of strangers reigne,
Ne suffer you against the rules of kinde
Your mother land to serue a forreine prince.

Eubulus. Loe here the end of Brutus royall line,
And loe the entry to the wofull wracke,
And vtter ruine of this noble realme.
The royall king, and eke his sonnes are slaine,
No ruler restes within the regall seate,
The heire, to whom the scepter longes, vnknowen,
That to eche force of forreine princes power,
Whom vauntage of our wretched state may moue
By sodeine armes to gaine so riche a realme,
And to the proud and gredie minde at home,
Whom blinded lust to reigne leades to aspire,
Loe Brittaine realme is left an open pray,
A present spoyle by conquest to ensue.
Who seeth not now how many rising mindes
Do feede their thoughts, with hope to reach a realme:
And who will not by force attempt to winne
So great a gaine, that hope perswades to haue:
A simple colour shall for title serue.
Who winnes the royall crowne will want no right,
Nor such as shall display by long discent
A lineall race to proue him lawfull king.
In the meane while these ciuil armes shall rage,
And thus a thousand mischiefes shall vnfolde,
And farre and neare spread thee (O Brittaine land)
All right and lawe shall cease, and he that had
Nothing to day, to morrowe shall enioye
Great heapes of golde, and he that flowed in wealth,
Loe he shall be bereft of life and all,
And happiest he that then possesseth least,
The wiues shall suffer rape, the maides defloured,

And

And children fatherleſſe ſhall weepe and waile,
with fire and ſworde thy native folke ſhall periſhe,
One kinſman ſhall bereaue an others life,
The father ſhall vnwitting ſlay the ſonne,
The ſonne ſhall ſlay the ſire and know it not,
women and maides the cruell ſouldiers ſword
Shall perſe to death, and tillie children loe,
That play in the ſtreetes and fieldes are found,
By violent hand ſhall cloſe their latter day.
whom ſhall the fierce and bloudy ſouldier
Reſerue to life? whom ſhall he ſpare from death?
Euen thou (O wretched mother) halfe alme,
Thou ſhalt beholde thy deare and onely childe
Slaine with the ſworde while he yet ſuckes thy breſt.
Loe, guiltleſſe bloud ſhall thus eche where be ſhed.
Thus ſhall the waſted ſoile yelde forth no fruite,
But dearth and famine ſhall poſſeſſe the land.
The townes ſhall be conſumed and burnt with fire,
The peopled cities ſhall ware deſolate,
And thou, O Brittaine, whilome in renowme,
whilome in wealth and fame, ſhalt thus be torne,
Diſmembred thus, and thus be rent in twaine,
Thus waſted and defaced, ſpoyled and deſtroyed,
Theſe be the fruites your ciuil warres will bring.
Hereto it commes when kinges will not conſent
To graue aduiſe, but followe willfull will.
This is the end, when in fonde princes hartes
Flattery preuailes, and ſage rede hath no place.
Theſe are the plages, when murder is the meane
To make new heires vnto the royall crowne.
Thus wreke the Gods, when that the mothers wrath
Nought but the bloud of her owne childe may ſwage.
Theſe miſchiefes ſpring when rebells will ariſe,
To worke reuenge and iudge their princes fact.
This, this enſues, when noble men do faile

In loyall trouth, and subiectes will be kinges.
And this doth growe when loe vnto the prince,
whom death or sodeine happe of life bereaues,
No certaine heire remaines, such certaine heire,
As not all onely is the rightfull heire,
But to the realme is so made knowen to be,
And trouth therby vested in subiectes hartes.
To owe fayth there where right is knowen to rest.
Alas, in Parliament what hope can be,
when is of Parliament no hope at all?
which, though it be assembled by consent,
Yet is not likely with consent to end,
while eche one for him selfe, or for his frend,
Against his foe, shall trauaile what he may.
while now the state left open to the man,
That shall with greatest force inuade the same,
Shall fill ambicious mindes with gaping hope,
when will they once with yelding hartes agree?
Or in the while, how shall the realme be vsed?
No, no: then Parliament should haue bene holden,
And certeine heires appointed to the crowne,
To stay the title of established right,
And in the people plant obedience,
while yet the prince did liue, whose name and power
By lawfull commons and authoritie
Might make a Parliament to be of force,
And might haue set the state in quiet stay.
But now O happie man, whom spedie death
Deprines of life, ne is enforced to see
These hugie mischiefes and these miseries,
These ciuil warres, these murders & these wronges.
Of iustice, yet must God in fine restore
This noble crowne vnto the lawfull heire:
For right will alwayes liue, and rise at length,
But wrong can neuer take deepe roote to last.